

with him, he knew that he was actuated by the most honourable and straightforward motives. He thought the mistake had arisen because Professor Pearson had drawn his results from alcoholics of a low grade who were probably innately better than the total abstainers who had got into that grade. With regard to the discussion, he thought the evidence brought forward went to show that alcoholism was responsible for a large number of admissions to asylums, but he still held that in the majority of cases alcohol was more in the nature of a coefficient than an actual cause. Having alluded to the difficulties of investigation in London, where the cases that ought to be examined were split up under the care of various institutions, infirmaries, hospitals, and asylums, he proceeded to differ with Dr. Jones in what the latter had said about cirrhosis of the liver. As with cirrhosis so with neurotic psychosis, one might say that, strictly speaking, it was not due to alcohol. There might be some microbic infection, but the fact remained that if the persons had not taken the alcohol they would not suffer from the neuritis or from the disease of the liver. He believed that alcohol allowed toxins to pass in from the alimentary canal, causing cirrhosis of the liver, and that the result was due to the absorption of these toxins rather than to the direct effect of the alcohol itself.

Election of Officers.

Previous to the discussion some business was transacted. The annual report of the society, read by the HONORARY SECRETARY, reviewed the work of the year and outlined possible future developments, including the establishment of research studentships. The TREASURER reported a balance in hand of £34. Dr. Hyslop was re-elected President, and the Vice-Presidents were re-elected, with the addition of the President of the British Medical Association. Dr. Claude Taylor was called to the office of Treasurer.

THE DAYLIGHT SAVING (?) BILL.

By JOHN MILNE, F.R.S.,

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I was led to the consideration of time in consequence of work which involves, amongst other things, the translation of times given for the occurrence of an event in a distant country into Greenwich or English time. Years and years ago I learnt that astronomers, geographical societies, or cable companies of any nationality whatever could give me little help in carrying out these apparently simple operations. To translate Indian time into English time you had, and may still have, to refer to 49 pages of the closely-printed *Indian Telegraph Guide*. For certain varieties of Chinese time you must still refer to the hours of the cat, the dog, and other animals. American time is supposed to be perfection. The country is divided up into zones, 15 degrees apart, each of which is separated from its neighbour by one hour. For certain purposes this is sufficient, but there are State laws, and States are not divided from each other by a mere meridian. To translate the time used in certain Pacific islands it is not always a question of hours, but of days. In one island it may be Sunday, but on a neighbouring one it may be Monday. Ordinary people talk glibly about time, but about time as it is kept in the world they usually know but little.

To put myself in a better position with this question, in 1893, through the kindness of the Foreign, Colonial, and India Offices, I was enabled to make inquiries about local, standard, legal, railway, astronomical, and other kinds of time which were kept in all parts of the world where we had representatives. I learnt much, and have since seen and noticed how in country after country a definite time has been adopted, and a trend has been taken towards the adoption of a standard. For various reasons the standard chosen was that of this country—G.M.T., or Greenwich mean time. The other day France sacrificed nine minutes in order to have the same time as Great Britain, Holland, Belgium, Spain, Algeria, and other places. France did not do this to save daylight, but it was for the sake of commercial transactions and international relationships that she put herself in line with her neighbours. When Cape Colony made herself an exact two

hours before Greenwich she adopted a time suitable to South Africa and easily comparable with that of other countries. To say that she took this action to save daylight is nonsense. People in South Africa, like those in Australia, want to know when cablegrams are dispatched, when contracts are completed, and they can do this best if they work in relationship to a standard.

It is now proposed to alter this standard, so that between the third Sunday in April and the third Sunday in September all our clocks shall be one hour fast. They will therefore show noon when it is really eleven, and show five when it is really only four.

Let us consider what this may mean in connexion with our "overseas" relationships, and then in relation to ourselves. Who will benefit and who will suffer?

Travellers, mails, and freight are now timed to reach the Continent at times which suit Continental arrangements, which have been adopted to fit in with British time. Inasmuch as these arrangements fall in line with those of European states in general, and then again with the arrangements of more distant countries, it is not likely that they will be altered to suit British eccentricity. The alternative is that the trains and steamer services of this country must suffer changes twice a year. But this threatened confusion is by no means the end of the trouble.

In our own country I will assume that there are millions of workmen who now get up at five o'clock to reach factories or works at six. As matters now stand, during the prescribed period of change each of these men rises twenty-seven times before the sun. When he has to get up at an imaginary five o'clock, which will be really four, he will have to do this 102 times. Thus the frequency of early morning darkness and morning cold will for the workman of Great Britain be increased fourfold. I have made no allowance here for dawn and twilight (cold and warmth), which, as everybody knows, are variable quantities.

Advocates of daylight saving who wilfully neglect to call attention to this fact are not good sportsmen. They might also call attention to the facts that ever since we have had a standard time the resident in the West of England always gets twenty or more minutes of afternoon sunlight than the man in the East, while the Scotsman gets in the summer months about an hour. So why all this hubbub? It is to give a few clerks in the South-east corner of England pleasant afternoons, to give to Devonshire and Scotland that which in a greater or less degree they already possess, and to disturb millions of households on cold, dark mornings.

It is a selfish, wicked, and ill-considered project, which, if carried out, will affect the nation with moral, financial, and physical trouble. If the master of the house has for more than three months of the year to get up at four, fumble about for matches, possibly light a fire, wake up a household, and go on a bike or a tram to his work, I can imagine that the mental strain involved would be such that his language and that of the household would excel that of Job.

When in the street, too, his chances of accident or bronchial troubles, particularly when frosts are about, would be increased. On arrival at the factory or workshop this would have to be lighted up and warmed. Upon this point the employer would have something to say.

The worst feature, perhaps, because it will hit the clerk as well as the workman, would be the fact that twice a year habits would have to be altered. Now, habits cannot be trifled with. We may change them, but the change takes time. Meals at irregular times are bad for our system, and the shifting of the hours of work is bad for the work. Medical men are well acquainted with the results of experiments bearing on these points, the inference from which is that, should the bill come into force, for a certain period twice a year the efficiency of the worker would be somewhat damped.

Those who live in the South-east of England are to go home at four because it has been legally enacted that they can push on the hands of the clock and call it five, bask in the sun, play more tennis, more golf, have more rifle-shooting, gain more health, and all the rest of it, whilst the workmen in our industrial centres are to rise at four. It is a daylight-saving proposal for a minority, and a darkness-giving bill for the majority.